

PARK AND RECREATION

GOAL

Ensure adequate park and recreational facilities and activities easily accessible to all portions of the community.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Progress Guide and General Plan of the City of San Diego speaks to older communities such as Greater North Park as follows:

“In older, already developed parts of the City, where recreation space is difficult to acquire, efforts should be directed toward providing staff and facilities which compensate for deficiencies in acreage. Land, equipment, and supervision in varying proportions can still add up to recreational opportunity and service to the residents. If acreage is reduced, facility investment and leadership should be correspondingly increased.”

General Plan park criteria are difficult to achieve due to the lack of available vacant land and the prohibitive cost of buying and clearing developed land in locations where the need is the greatest. In addition, acquisition of developed land for park expansion purposes generally means the removal of housing stock and the displacement of the residents of that housing stock.

North Park Recreation Center is the only developed community or neighborhood park in Greater North Park. It is an eight-acre community park providing lighted baseball fields and tennis courts, shuffleboard, picnic and play areas and a recreation building (see Figure 19).

Montclair Park is an undeveloped neighborhood park of approximately nine acres, including “paper” streets, located south of Quince Street and next to Interstate 805. Development of this park is planned for 1990. However, due to the community’s lack of adequate parks, consideration should be given to accelerating the development of this park. Paper streets within the park site should be vacated as part of the park development program (see Figure 19). The park should be developed as a passive neighborhood park featuring play areas, picnic facilities, landscaping and lawn areas.

Balboa Park is a regional facility which also provides recreational opportunities to neighboring communities. Portions of the park which border Greater North Park offer tennis courts, shuffleboard, a bicycle track, golf course and other forms of active and passive recreation. Most of these facilities are found at the Morley Field recreation area in the northeast corner of the park. The Birney Elementary School Park, located on Park Boulevard at Meade Avenue in the Uptown Community, also serves the Greater North Park Community. It is scheduled for improvements in fiscal year 1992 with the provision of a turfed athletic area, reconstruction of the existing lighted athletic field with attendant facilities and the construction of a comfort station.

While also not within the Greater North Park community, the old Trolley Barn site on Adams Avenue has been acquired by the City and is scheduled for development as a neighborhood park in fiscal year 1988. This facility would serve the residents of the northwest portion of Greater North Park (see Figure 19). Development of this park could be coordinated with the Park and Adams neighborhood commercial center by means of a common visual theme involving landscaping, ornamental lighting and clearly-defined pedestrian connections.

OBJECTIVES

- Provide, to the extent feasible given existing constraints, a system of parks and recreational facilities within the community consistent with the Progress Guide and General Plan standards.
- Continue enhancement of the North Park Recreation Center as the central facility and focal point serving Greater North Park's active recreation needs.
- Enhance public space adjacent to community facilities, such as post office, libraries, schools and churches, to serve as a focus for passive recreation.
- Establish smaller neighborhood parks and mini-parks throughout the community, especially in areas more distant from larger park facilities.
- Encourage development of public park areas in commercial districts, particularly in areas with high pedestrian activity, to provide visual relief and complementary activity areas.
- Require the provision of private recreational facilities in conjunction with new larger residential projects.
- Provide or maintain adequate access to Balboa Park and its facilities for Greater North Park residents.
- Minimize any adverse impacts from regional visitors to Balboa Park on the Greater North Park community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Normally, Greater North Park, exclusive of Balboa Park, would be considered to be lacking in adequate park and recreation facilities. Based upon its projected population, the community should have at least two community parks of 20 usable acres each and nine neighborhood parks of ten acres each. These figures are based upon standards estimated by the Progress Guide and General Plan of the City of San Diego.

However, the existence and proximity of Balboa Park must be taken into consideration since most of Greater North Park is within the one and one-half mile radius established by the Progress Guide and General Plan as the standard for community parks. Therefore, due to the proximity to Balboa Park, the community should not be considered to be deficient in community parks and

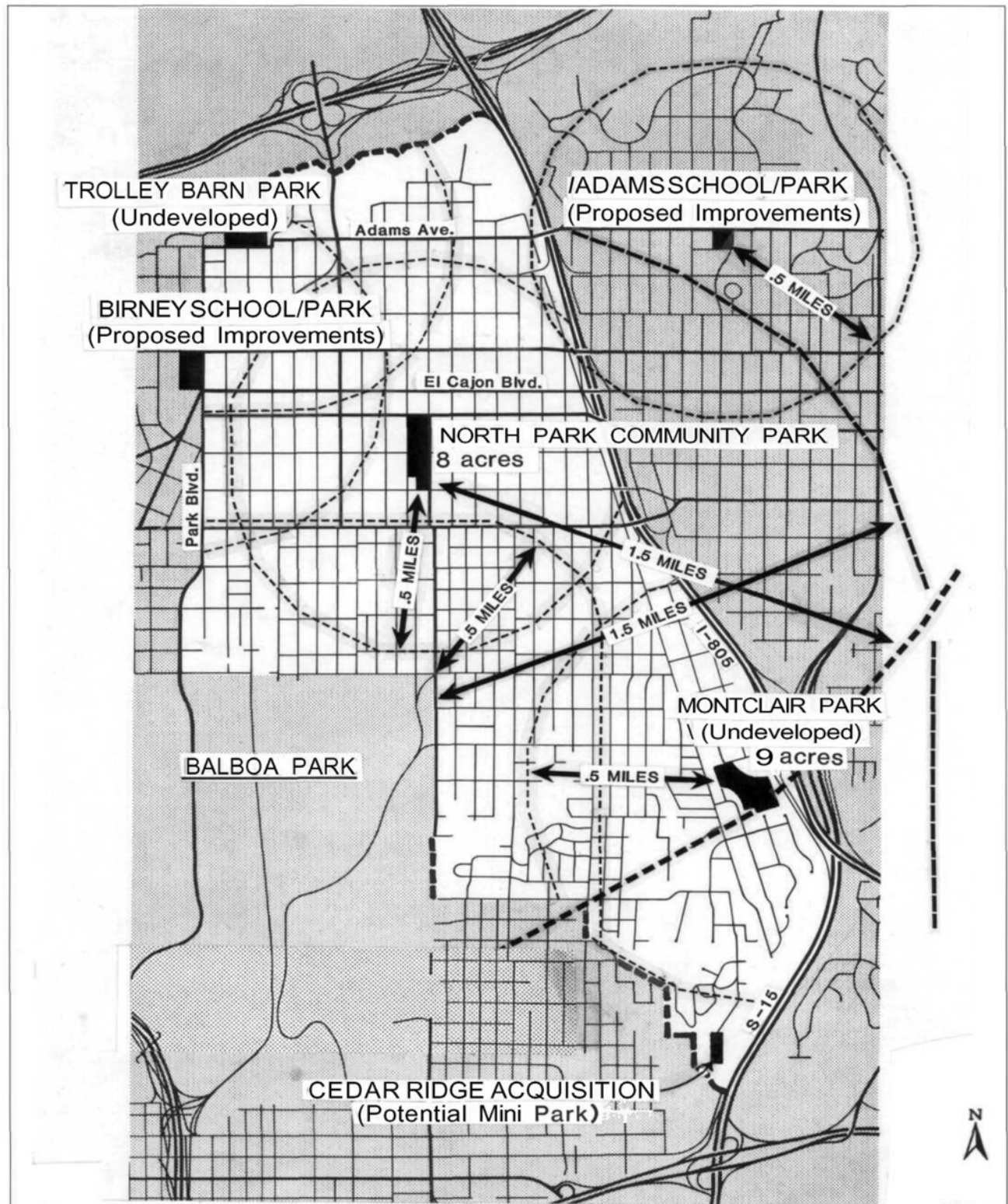
only deficient in neighborhood parks from an acreage standpoint, since most of the community is within one-half-mile walking radius of an existing or proposed park. Based upon Progress Guide and General Plan Standards, Greater North Park currently has a 21-acre deficiency in park acreage. After the completion of the Cedar Ridge mini-park, the community will still be deficient by 17-18 acres. In addition, the community's sole community park (North Park Recreation Center) is 12 acres short of the 20-acre standard for community parks.

There are a number of possibilities which should be considered in seeking improvement to the current park and recreation situation in the community.

Consideration might be given to utilizing all or portions of the Garfield School site as a combined neighborhood park and child care center. In order to achieve this objective, cooperation of the San Diego Unified School District would be necessary since displacement and relocation of existing educational services would result. In addition, it may become necessary, at some point in the future, for the site to revert back to use as an elementary school. However, in that instance, joint school/park use of the four-acre site should be explored.

The City has recently acquired the Cedar Ridge property at the foot of Pentuckett Avenue. The upland or mesa portion of this property could be developed as a small, passive mini-park of approximately three or four acres.

There should be ongoing cooperation between the City and the School District in efforts to expand existing sites and to maximize the use of existing facilities. Street closings, where feasible, are one method of expanding existing facilities.



EXISTING AND PROPOSED PARKS
Greater North Park
 City of San Diego • Planning Department

Figure
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Property acquisition, including possible land trades, are another possibility of expanding existing sites. In addition, the sale of other City-owned properties in the community which are not needed or are not suitable for public uses, should be explored as a method of obtaining funds for acquiring properties abutting existing park facilities. Table 5 lists park facilities within and abutting Greater North Park.

TABLE 5 - PARK FACILITIES		
Name	Type	Size
Balboa	Regional	8 acres
North Park Rec. Center	Community Neighborhood	9 acres
Montclair Cedar Ridge	Mini	3 - 4 acres
Trolley Barn*	Neighborhood Community	
Adams Avenue*	Community	
Birney School*		
* Parks located outside the community		

Balboa Park, although primarily thought of as a regional facility, does provide neighborhood- and community-oriented recreational opportunities. A “Balboa Park Development and Management Plan” has been prepared and is currently undergoing environmental review. Aspects of that plan which will impact Greater North Park include the addition of a new municipal gymnasium at Morley Field. More significant are the recommendations to extend Upas Street across SR-163 and Florida Canyon and to extend 28th Street across Switzer Canyon.

“Certain adverse visual effects would be associated with both the 28th Street and Upas Street extensions. These effects would be the result of the extension of 28th Street across Switzer Canyon and the extension of Upas Street across SR-163 and Florida Canyon. These extensions would require construction of three bridges with extensive grading and landform alteration. These bridges would significantly alter the existing visual environment in the surrounding areas. The 28th Street extension would reduce the value of Switzer Canyon as a visual amenity for homes along the canyon edge.” (Preliminary Draft Environmental Impact Report — EQD No. 84-0595).

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

- 1 Establish and maintain an ongoing cooperative program between the City and the School District to maximize the use of existing recreational facilities and to maximize efforts to expand these facilities.

2. Establish financing programs necessary to upgrade and expand existing recreational facilities.
3. If acreage deficiencies of the community's park system cannot be specified, then efforts should be made towards providing additional staff and facilities which make up for those deficiencies.
4. Development of the Trolley Barn park site should be coordinated with the rehabilitation of the Park and Adams commercial center.
5. Due to the community's current deficiency in park acreage, consideration should be given to accelerating the development of Montclair Park.

OPEN SPACE

GOAL

Provide an open space system which preserves existing canyons and hillsides throughout the community and reintroduces open space areas throughout the community as redevelopment occurs.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

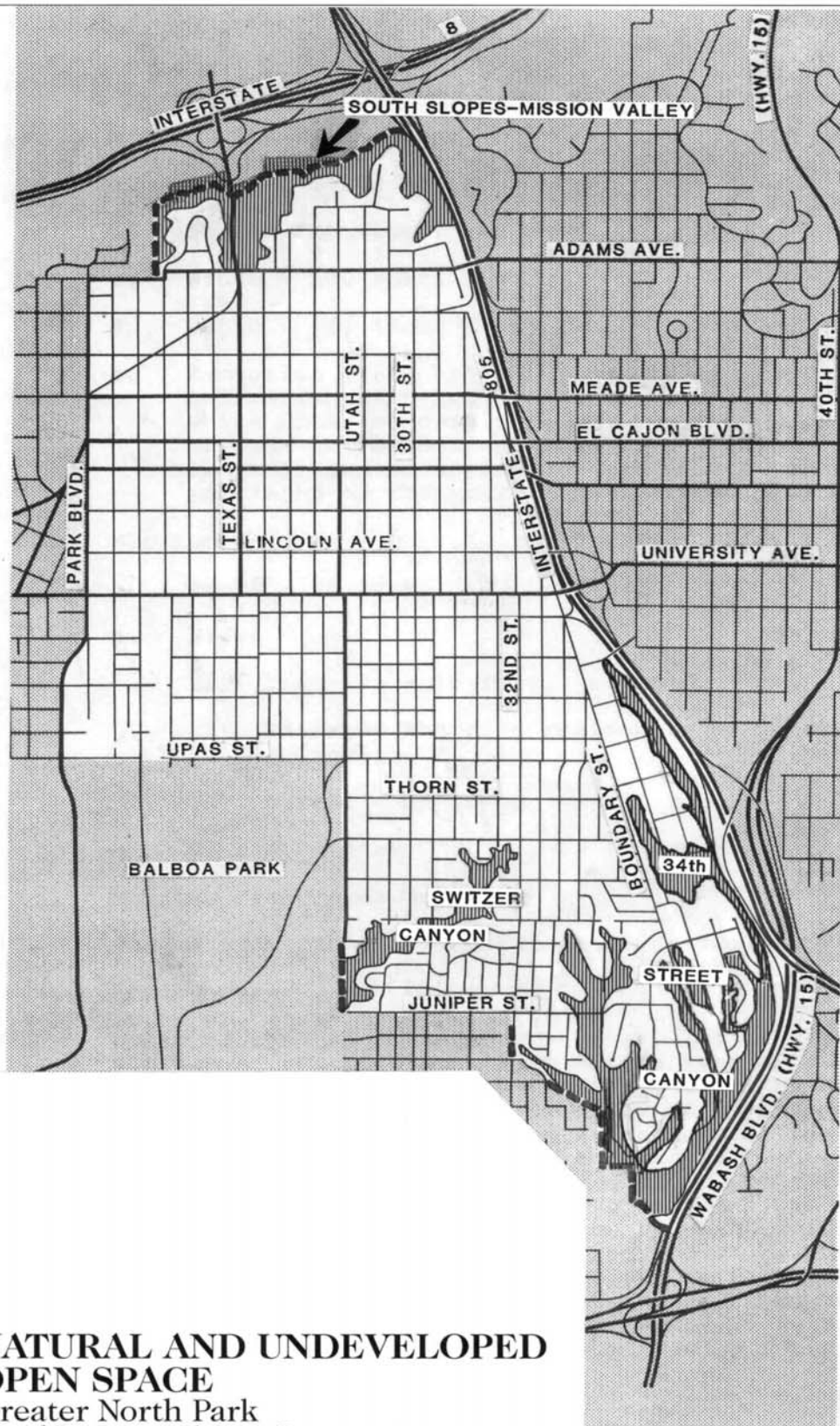
Open space in the Greater North Park community consists of hillsides and canyons. The neighborhoods of University Heights and Normal Heights are bounded to a certain extent by the south slopes of Mission Valley, which are currently designated as open space. Switzer Canyon, in the Burlingame and South Park areas, and the 34th Street Canyon, in the southeast section of the community near Greater Golden Hill, complete the open space system. Minor open space acquisitions have been accomplished on the Mission Valley slopes; major acquisitions are in process in the 34th Street Canyon; and the acquisition of Switzer Canyon is nearly complete (see Figure 20).

There are two forms of open space in Greater North Park. One is generally in slopes remaining after subdivision and development of land where the slopes are mostly undevelopable and owned by individual property owners. It is expected that they will continue to be privately maintained and protected. The other form consists of several large canyons which are unsubdivided or in large lots in single ownerships. These canyons are a notable part of San Diego's beauty and heritage. Every effort must be made to preserve and protect the integrity of these canyons and systems of canyons. They are among the few remaining wildlife habitats within the urbanized area of the City. Access for study and passive recreation should be allowed, but care must be taken to allow minimal disruption of the integrity of the canyons.

The purpose of this open space element is to ensure that open space conservation policies for the natural open space areas are well coordinated with adjacent land development. It is also the purpose of this element to ensure that the environmental and visual impact of upland development, as it relates to natural open space and public view presentation, is adequately addressed.

OBJECTIVES

- Preserve remaining undeveloped canyons and hillsides as important features of visual open space and community definition.
- Utilize publicly-controlled open space for passive recreation where feasible.
- Develop private, usable open space throughout the community by incorporating landscaped areas into new residential and commercial projects.
- Acquire open space through open space easements and dedications or other mechanisms as part of project approvals.
- Coordinate open space conservation policies with adjacent land development.
- Establish requirements as part of development approvals for the rehabilitation of disturbed on-site open space.



**NATURAL AND UNDEVELOPED
OPEN SPACE**
Greater North Park
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Figure
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Hillside Areas

Hillsides which have significant open space value are the highest priority in terms of preservation. They include any slope of 25 percent gradient or greater and the canyon bottoms. Only very low residential development density should be allowed on these sites, not to exceed approximately one dwelling unit per acre (RI-40000). Figure 6, in the Housing Element, should be consulted as to those areas recommended for RI-40000 zoning.

Minimal disturbance of the natural terrain and vegetation should be permitted within the undeveloped portion of this zone, unless required due to the necessity to stabilize other areas of the site. Grading shall be avoided by using appropriate building types, such as split level or custom houses, to avoid the typical grading needed for flat slab construction. Building height shall not exceed 30 feet.

Any graded areas in these areas shall be revegetated with native vegetation to minimize erosion and soil instability and to enhance the undisturbed open space area. However, the use of native fire resistant and non-invasive species should also be encouraged directly adjacent to development.

Grading shall be avoided by using appropriate building types, such as split level or custom houses, thus avoiding the typical grading needed for flat slab construction.

Clustering of development is a technique that can be utilized to preclude or limit intrusions into sensitive areas. However, any project featuring attached dwelling units should be designed to be similar in scale and character with the surrounding neighborhood.

Remaining undeveloped portions of the hillside areas should be preserved through open space easements, open space lot designations, or non-building area easements.

Open Space Fire Prevention

The potential for brush fires peaks from May through October. Little rainfall, combined with summer heat and Santa Ana winds, can create an explosive condition.

The following measures should be implemented by property owners adjacent to open space areas.

Short Term

- a. Thin out existing woody or dry vegetation.
 - Raise tree branch height - lower shrubs underneath trees.
 - Remove branches near structures.
 - Thin out shrubs on slopes - remove near trees.

- Remove highly flammable plants.
- b. Install irrigation at top of slope to establish a buffer.
- c. Plant low-growing drought-tolerant fire retardant plants at top of slope.

Mid-Term

- a. Extend buffer and continue thinning.

Long-Term

- a. Irrigate top of slope buffer and keep vegetation below 24 inches in height.
- b. Continually thin and clear slopes of dry plant material and debris.
- c. Maintain and control vegetation near structures.
- d. Plant fire retardant or resistant trees and plants in yard areas.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

1. Continue ongoing open space acquisition program in accordance with the criteria established by the Park and Recreation Department.
2. Formulate implementing legislation regulating development in hillside and related areas.
3. Initiate a rezoning program within all designated open space areas utilizing the following guidelines:
 - a. Multiple-family zoned properties should be rezoned to an appropriate single-family zone;
 - b. Large parcels should be rezoned to appropriate lower-density single-family zones; and,
 - c. City-owned open space should be rezoned to appropriate open space zones.

Note: Reference should be made to the housing element for specific rezoning recommendations.

4. For purposes of determining allowable density, any portion of a proposed Planned Residential Development which is designated open space and is in the Hillside Review (HR) Overlay District should be restricted to one dwelling unit per acre.

5. The development in natural canyon areas shall be limited to residential, or other low intensity open space type uses. This should encourage open space preservation and allow property owners to have some reasonable development rights in the event the City or other government agency is unable to purchase the property.
6. All projects located within a hillside and canyon open space area should be subject to development review for the purpose of preserving the area's habitat and natural characteristics. Project review should be based on each project site's major features. Refinements and modifications to recommended development regulations for open space and hillside areas may be incorporated into implementing legislation. In addition, it may be necessary to adjust land use and density boundaries in order to properly apply implementing zoning legislation. Finally, the achievability of recommended development intensities and residential densities may be predicated upon the design standards and development regulations of the implementing legislation.

CONSERVATION

GOAL

- Provide a clean and healthy environment in which to live.

OBJECTIVES

- Minimize and avoid adverse noise impacts by planning for the appropriate placement of high noise generating land uses and by mitigating existing noise impacts, where feasible.
- Encourage water conservation through development and landscaping guidelines.
- Conserve energy by utilizing alternative energy sources and energy-efficient building and site design principles.

DISCUSSION

Conservation and protection of natural resources is becoming an increasingly important aspect of daily life in every community. Air, water, land and energy are resources which must be conserved or protected. Conservation is the planned management, preservation, and wise utilization of natural resources. Its purpose is to prevent the wasteful exploitation or destruction of the community's natural resources and adoption of policies for their preservation, development and wise use.

Air Quality

Monitoring of air quality at the Island Avenue and El Cajon Air Monitoring Stations (the two closest stations) for the years 1977, 1978 and 1979 (and 1980 for Island Avenue) indicate that the California standards for ozone, hydrocarbons, and particulates were exceeded while the California standards for nitrogen dioxide and sulfur dioxide were achieved during the most recent monitoring year. The standard for carbon monoxide was exceeded at both air monitoring stations in 1979, but in 1980 the standard was achieved at Island Avenue.

The Park North-East community planning area is located in the San Diego Air Basin/San Diego County which has been classified as a non-attainment area for the pollutants of ozone and particulates; the County is an attainment area for nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide and sulfur dioxide. The most significant source of air pollution in the San Diego Air Basin is automobile emissions. There are no known stationary sources in Greater North Park which significantly impact air quality.

Noise

Air and ground transportation are the predominant noise sources in the Greater North Park community planning area. Traffic volumes on all existing freeways, prime arterials, major streets, and many collector streets within the Park North-East generate average noise levels of 65

decibels and greater on adjacent properties. Noise contours for the year ending September 30, 1981, indicate that only the southwestern tip of the community was impacted by average noise levels of 65 and greater because of aircraft approaching Lindbergh Field.

According to the San Diego Plan for Air Transportation prepared for SANDAG a “comparison of the 1980 and 1985 contours shows that the contour areas are reduced in later years, reflecting changes in aircraft types that will serve Lindbergh Field in the future.” More specifically, “based on estimated fleet replacement rates and manufacturers’ estimates, it is assumed that all carrier aircraft operating from Lindbergh Field will meet Federal Aviation Regulation (FAR Part 36) noise standards by 1985.” As a consequence, the aircraft projected 60 CNEL noise contour for 1995 falls outside the Park North-East community.

Energy

There is general agreement that existing ways of life, urban patterns, transportation facilities, buildings, and equipment all reflect a past when energy was abundant and cheap. Many other countries, with living standards equal to ours, use less than half the energy per capita that is consumed in the United States. Apart from savings in transportation, the next most fertile area for improving efficiency is building and development design and land use patterns. It is indisputable that sprawled low-density urban development increases travel distances, street and highway requirements, public utility extensions, and public service costs (fire, police, schools) - all of which translate directly into increased energy use. Grouped structures and higher density development have recognized energy savings. Subdivisions in areas that are hot in summer and cold in winter, or in areas where auto dependence is mandatory, or where cultural and commercial and recreational and employment facilities are lacking, can only result in increased energy use - not only in initial development but also in yearly operation and in the more nebulous energy costs that traffic congestion, waste water, and public services demand.

In addition to the location of development, its design can be oriented toward better use of energy. Narrow streets reduce construction energy and materials, and reflected summer heat. Deciduous street trees allow summer shade and winter sun on buildings and streets, and make walking and bicycling more attractive. More extensive walks and bicycle paths reduce auto use. Smaller minimum lot sizes reduce travel, utility and service distances.

Important energy savings can also be realized through energy-conserving site planning and building design techniques and principles. Flexibility in required setbacks allows building to be oriented to maximize sun access and wind for natural heating and cooling factors. Designs that consider micro-climates, building efficiency, summer shade and winter exposure of windows, and the energy implications of colors and materials can reduce total energy operating needs by as much as 50 percent.